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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: CAMPAIGN TO OUST PRESIDENT CHEN SHUI-BIAN

¶1. Summary: Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies focused their coverage August 26-28 on the multiple efforts to oust President Chen Shui-bian; the rally held by pro-Chen supporters in Taipei Saturday; and the Mainland Affairs Council's announcement Friday of the "Taiwan Strait Tourism and Travel Association" to negotiate with China over cross-Straits tourism issues. Both the pro-status quo "China Times" and pro-unification "United Daily News" front-paged a likely announcement by former DPP Chairman Shih Ming-teh Monday afternoon that the sit-in campaign to oust President Chen will kick off September 9. The "China Times" also front-paged on August 26 the results of its latest joint survey with CTI-TV, which showed that 42 percent of those polled said they support Shih's campaign, while 20 percent said they oppose it. The same poll also found that given Chen's insistence on staying on in his position and the DPP's all-out effort to support him, 60 percent of the respondents said they believe the chances are slim for Shih's campaign to succeed in ousting Chen, and only 8 percent believe it will succeed.

On U.S. arms sales to Taiwan, the "China Times" ran a banner headline on page four August 28 that said "Displeased with Taiwan Stalling Arms Procurements, U.S. Arms Sales to Taiwan Downgraded: No Budget, No Talks."

¶2. In terms of editorials and commentaries, a "China Times" editorial criticized the DPP for its stubborn support of President Chen regardless of right or wrong. The article said the DPP has personally destroyed the two valuable assets that the party has been most proud of: namely, the Formosa Incident and the 2002 transfer of power. A separate "China Times" analysis said the DPP's all-out effort to protect Chen will only destroy itself, while the KMT can sit idly by and watch the DPP and Shih fight with each other. An opinion piece in the limited-circulation, pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" on the other hand, said Chen's resignation would not solve any of the structural problems with government, and instead, it could even trigger a more severe political crisis. End summary.

A) "What the DPP Destroys Is in Fact Its Own Spiritual Assets"

The pro-status quo "China Times" [circulation: 400,000] editorialized (8/26):

"Everyone knows very clearly that for the DPP at this moment, no matter whether it supports Bian or opposes him, all the party cares about is the logic of power, which is totally irrelevant to morality, a sense of values, or ethics. But during the party's Faustian deal, perhaps only few clear-headed DPP members know in their hearts that what the DPP has lost is far greater than what it has gained. At least, just over the past few weeks, the DPP itself has personally cleaned out, consumed, and even subverted the two assets that it has been most proud of in the process of Taiwan's

democratization: namely, the Formosa Incident and the transfer of power.

"The reason that the historical significance of the transfer of power has grown dim is not entirely because of the campaign of one million people to oust Bian, but mostly because of the DPP's stubborn support for Bian without telling right from wrong, a move which showed that the DPP has denied every one of the values that it once upheld so highly about the transfer of power. The DPP's choice to tie itself to Chen Shui-bian, something it has to do in terms of political reality, is understandable. But has it ever occurred to the DPP that even if President Chen may be able to complete his term, he will be closely associated with the topic of 'resignation' during the remainder of his term? Or perhaps Chen's approval ratings will no longer rise again until he finishes the remainder of his term. The result of the DPP's all-out effort to support Bian will not help to redeem the party, but will only bury itself along with Chen as he finishes his term. ..."

B) "Securing Bian May Likely Destroy the Green Camp; KMT Can Sit Idly and Watch Others Fight"

Journalist Hsiao Hsu-tseng said in an analysis in the pro-status "China Times" [circulation: 400,000] (08/28/06):

"How Ma Ying-jeou is going to deal with Shih Ming-teh's campaign to oust Bian has become a topic that is being heatedly discussed in the political arena. Perhaps some people in the DPP anticipate that both Ma and Shih will 'get hurt.' But the DPP may fail to foresee that the KMT will definitely 'sit idly and watch the others fight.' The more concentrated the power to support Bian and oppose Shih gets, the better news it is for the Blue camp. ..."

"For the DPP, Shih's campaign to oust Bian is a battle to secure the party's political power, which it must win, so it can put morality and its values in a secondary position. But for the KMT, Shih's campaign is actually a battle of values and interests inside the DPP, ... and surely the KMT wants to sit idly and watch the two fight each other. Given the facts that Chen will firmly stay on in his position and that the DPP will persevere to protect Bian, the result of Shih's movement is expected. Ma will walk away safely as long as he sticks to his previous position of administration by the law. Chen will win a bitter victory, but for the DPP and heavyweights like Annete Lu, Yu Shyi-kun, Su Tseng-chang, and Frank Hsieh, this will be a battle they are unlikely to win, and the only difference is just how much each of them loses."

C) "Be Careful What You Wish for if Chen Goes"

Liu Kuan-teh, a Taipei-based political commentator, opined in the pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" (8/26):

"... We should take seriously the public's craving for stability and respect judicial procedures in unveiling the truth. If evidence shows that Chen was personally responsible for illegal activity, he should bear the political and moral responsibility and resign. Yet Chen's resignation would not solve any of the structural problems with government. Indeed, it could trigger an even more severe political crisis. The pan-blue alliance would obstruct Chen's successor and exploit the transfer of power. Can Taiwan afford a prolonged crisis lasting until 2008? Can Shih guarantee - as he has claimed - that the ruling and opposition parties will engage in a rational dialogue if Chen resigns?"

"As a country struggling to deepen its democracy, Taiwan yearns for more discipline, institutionalization and order in all phases of its national life. Upset with endless finger-pointing, a sense of political unrest and instability, the manipulation of ethnicity and the DPP's apparent trend toward political decay and corruption, voters are looking for national reconciliation, a strong leadership that can enhance an institutionalized system of politics, a truly independent judiciary and relatively clean politics. ..."

YOUNG